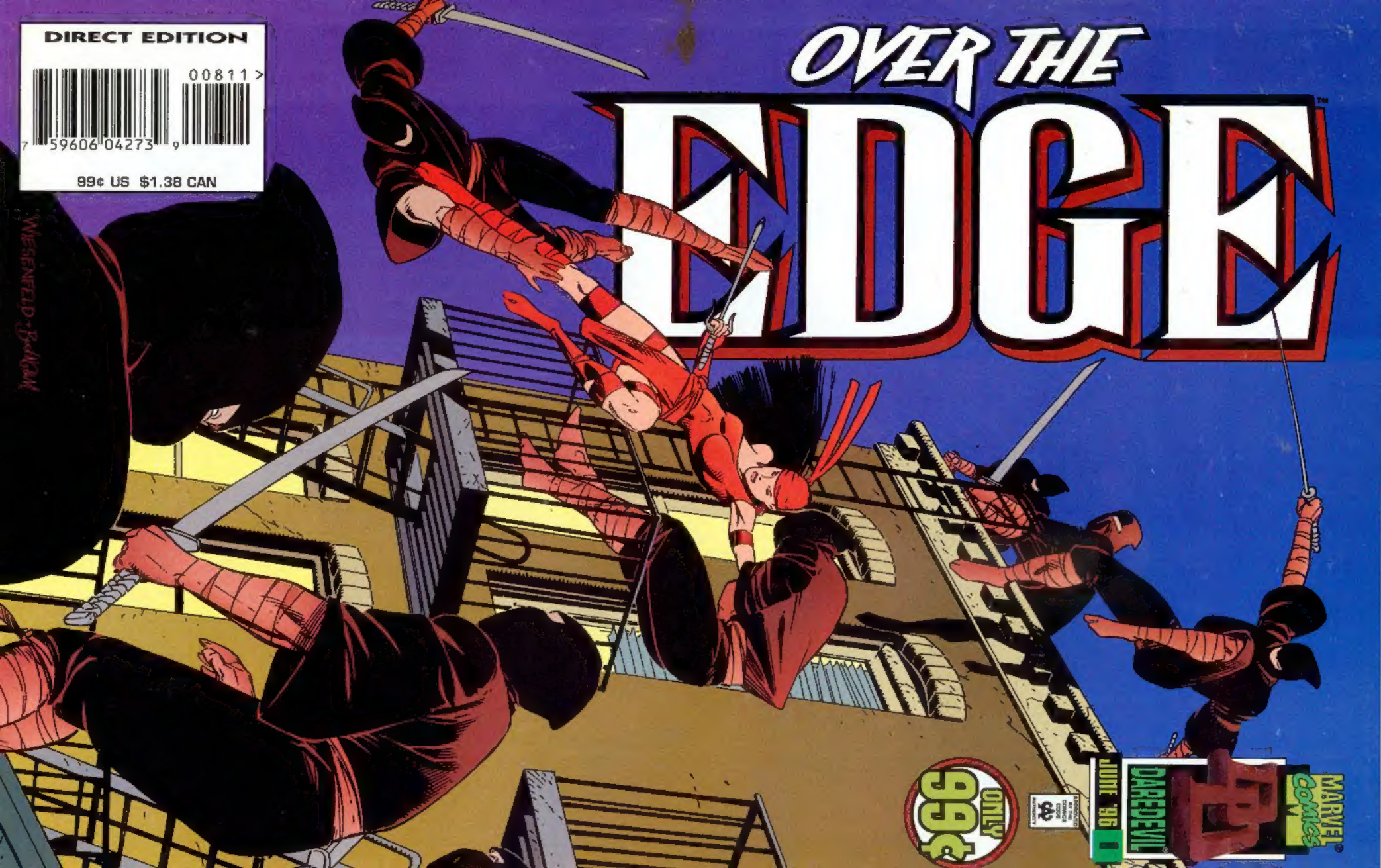
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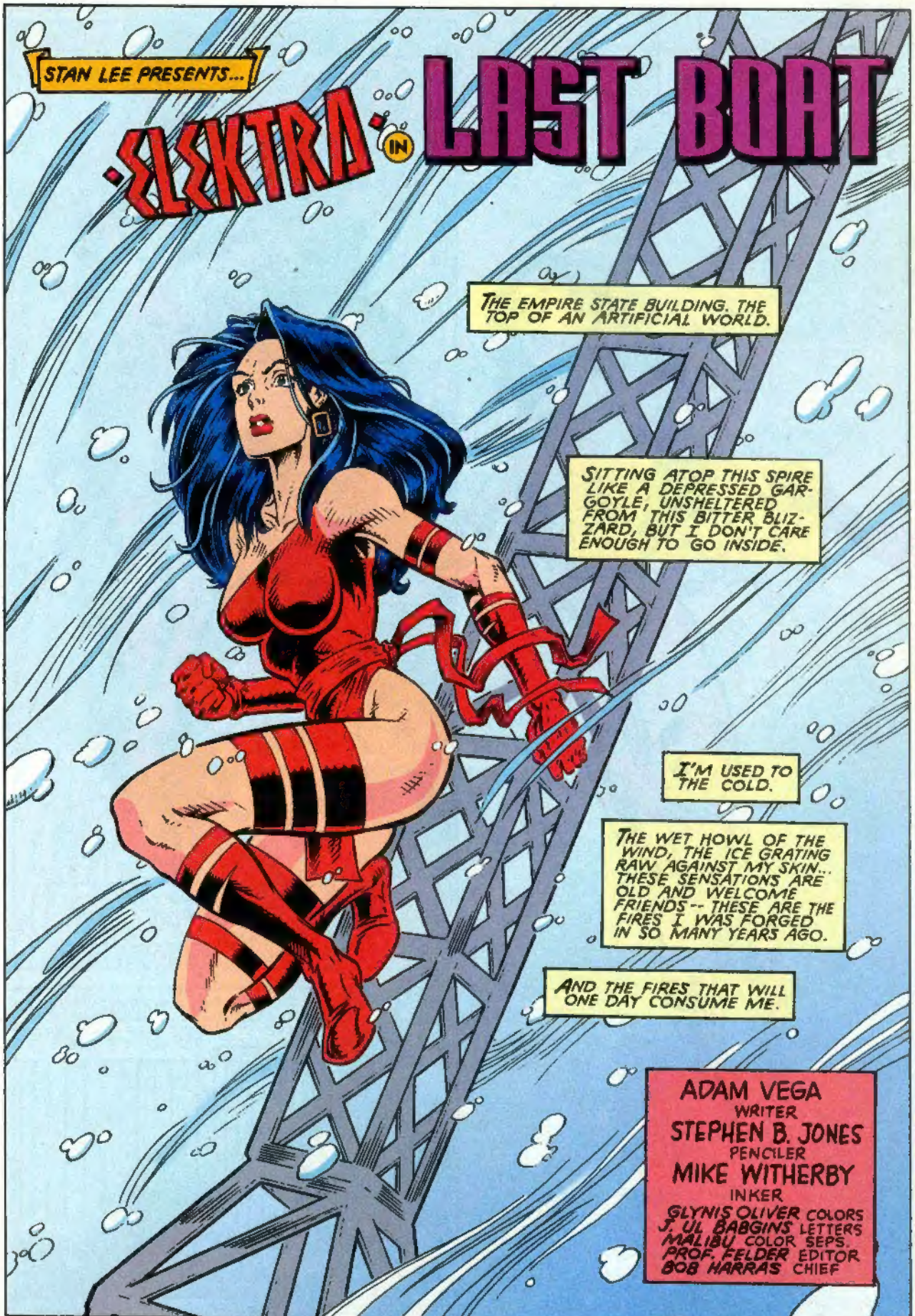

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THERE IS A SENSUAL THRILL-- REACHING OUT TO KISS DEATH.
BLISS.
UNTETHERED. ADRIFT IN THE WIND. A SLAVE ONLY TO GRAVITY.
BLISS. OBLIVIOUS TO ANY THOUGHTS OR REGRETS OR CONFUSIONS.
THE MOMENT · IS PURE. CLEAR. WITH PURPOSE.
AND ENDS AS IT ALWAYS DOES ...TOO QUICKLY.
I LAND ON THE OBSERVATION DECK WITH LESS THAN A WHISPER. THE GUARD'S SENSES ARE TOO DULL TO NOTICE ME.
I COULD EASILY KILL HIM IN THIRTY DIFFERENT WAYS WITHOUT THINKING. THAT IS MY PROFESSION-- MY ART.

BUT WHAT WOULD BE THE POINT?
THERE'S ENOUGH SENSELESSNESS IN MY LIFE... AND I'VE INDULGED IN TOO MANY DARK WHIMS.
I GAVE MYSELF UNTO THIS DARK LIFE WHEN THE HAND TRAINED ME IN THESE KILLING ARTS.
FIRE
EXIT
EXIT
HE IS INNOCENT. HE CAN WALK AWAY FROM THIS JOB AT THE END OF THE DAY-- BACK TO HIS NORMAL LIFE.
AND WHAT CAN I WALK BACK TO...?
NOTHING. THERE IS NO NORMAL LIFE FOR ME. I HAVE BECOME THE VERY THING I DETESTED IN THE MASTERS OF THE HAND.
THIS SNOW REMINDS ME OF TOO MANY LOST THINGS. MY MOOD IS BECOMING SO FULL OF MELANCHOLY.
I SHOULD CONCENTRATE ON THE JOB AT HAND.
NOT INDULGE IN REGRETS.

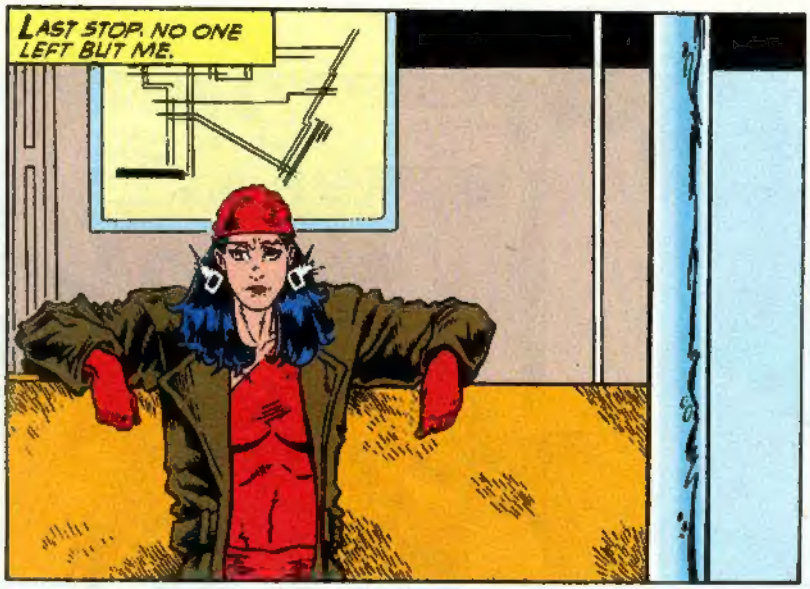
SOON THE TRAIN WILL STOP WHERE I NEED TO GO. I'LL GO UP THE STAIRS AND WALK TOWARDS THE PIER. AND THERE I'LL FINISH MY CONTRACT. JUST A JOB.
JUST A JOB.
THERE'S NO NEED TO RUSH.
THE WOMAN NEEDED ME. HER LIFE WAS FULL OF CONSTANT PAIN AND ANGER, AND SHE SOUGHT RELIEF IN THE ONLY WAY SHE KNEW HOW.
MY HUSBAND WAS AN AMBASSADOR TO A SMALL COUNTRY IN AFRICA THAT MOST PEOPLE HAD NEVER HEARD OF, LET ALONE VISITED.
THROUGH VENGEANCE.
FINE WITH ME.
HE WAS NOTHING. AND SO HAPPY ABOUT IT.
SO WHY WAS HE DEEMED IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO BE KILLED? AND WHY WEREN'T MY CHILDREN SPARED?

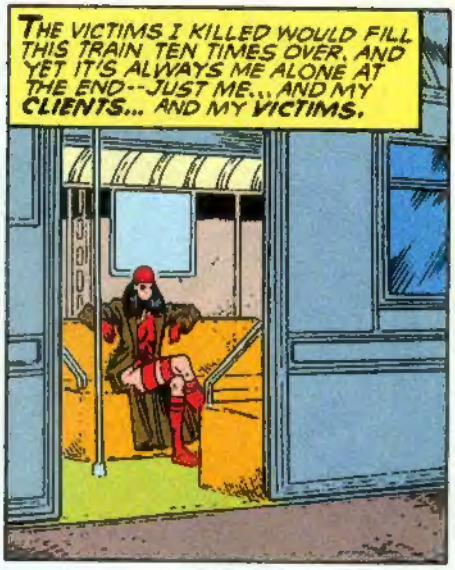
TEN YEARS I'VE ASKED MYSELF THIS, OVER AND OVER AND...
...Sigh.
I'LL NEVER FIGURE OUT WHY... BUT AT LEAST--
--AT LEAST I'VE FOUND OUT WHO THE ASSASSINS WERE. PART OF SOME FANATICAL SECT CALLED... THE HAND. ONE BY ONE, I'VE ARRANGED THEIR DEATHS...
...ALL SAVE FOR ONE WOMAN...
...A WOMAN WHO THINKS SHE CAN ESCAPE HER PAST AND LIVE A HAPPY FUTURE.
HOW DARE SHE?! I WILL NOT ALLOW HER TO RAISE A FAMILY AFTER SHE DESTROYED MY OWN!
SHE'LL TASTE HER OWN BLOOD, JUST LIKE MY CHILDREN DID!
IT'S A SIMPLE JOB. SHE'S IN TROUBLE WITH THE ORGANIZATION SHE WORKED FOR. SHE THINKS SHE'S GOING TO ESCAPE. SHE WANTS TO LEAVE THE U.S. AND RECEIVE SANCTUARY IN ANOTHER COUNTRY.
IN TWO DAYS, SHE AND HER LOVER ARE GOING TO WAIT FOR A BOAT TO TAKE THEM TO THIS SANCTUARY. THEY MUSTN'T BOARD THAT BOAT.
OF COURSE, YOU'LL BE PAID HANDSOMELY. I KNOW YOU'RE WORTH A HUNDRED TIMES ANYTHING I GIVE YOU.
SHE THINKS SHE'LL SLEEP WELL AFTER THE MURDERER'S DEATH. I KNOW BETTER...
...BUT MY JOB WASN'T TO DISSOLVE HER ILLUSIONS. IT WAS TO EXACT VENGEANCE.
IT'S ALL I'M GOOD FOR.
MY FEE.

THIS WOMAN COULD NOT SUSPECT WHAT WE HAVE IN COMMON-- DESTROYED FAMILIES.
THE PAIN IN HER EYES LOOKED LIKE THE PAIN IN MY FATHER'S EYES WHENEVER HE SPOKE OF MY MOTHER... WHENEVER HE--
--SIGH... STOP IT.
SHE DIED VIOLENTLY... WITH ME STILL INSIDE HER WOMB. SOMETIMES I THINK THAT EXPLAINS SO MUCH...
...TOO MUCH.
MY FATHER'S EYES NEVER LOST THAT LOOK OF PAIN... EVEN WHEN HE DIED IN FRONT OF ME. IT WAS ALWAYS ABOUT LOSS WITH HIM.
SOME WOMAN THINKS SHE'LL FIND PEACE BY KILLING HER FAMILY'S KILLER? FINE THEN. WHO AM I NOT TO HELP? I'LL BE HER HARPY--HER FURY--
I COULD REMOVE HIS HEART AND HAND IT TO HIM BEFORE HIS NEXT OFFENSIVE WORD.
Hey. YOU. DON'T YOU KNOW THERE'S A BLIZZARD GOING ON? YOU'RE CRAZY. YOU'LL CATCH YOUR DEATH DRESSED LIKE THAT.
YOU SOME KIND OF HOOKER OR SOMETHING? MAYBE YOU'RE A DRAG QUEEN?
ANY STRANGER CAN HOLD YOUR DAMNATION OR YOUR SALVATION. YOU HAVE TO BE CAREFUL IN THIS LIFE.

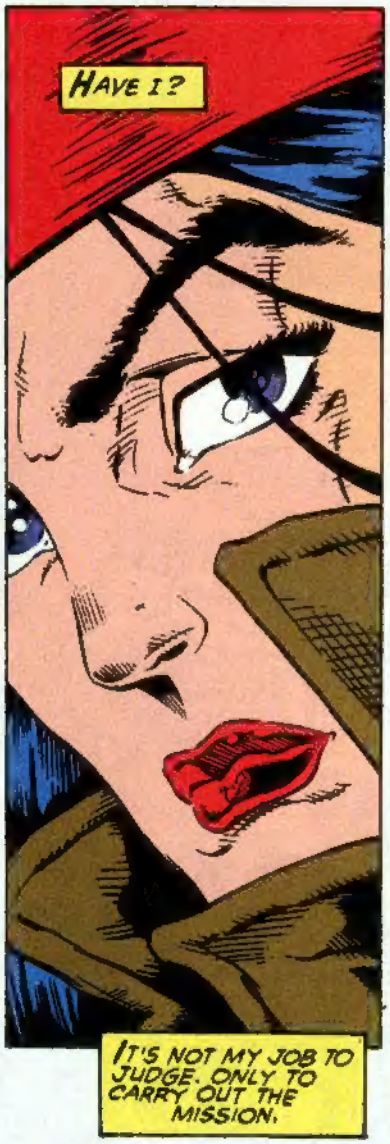
IT'S STILL TOO EARLY.
I DON'T LIKE THIS. IT WON'T COME.
IT WILL, JOAN, WE'RE JUST HERE A LITTLE EARLY. WE'RE ON THE SAFE SIDE.
AS IF OUR LIVES EVER HAD A SAFE SIDE.
WHEN THE BOAT COMES, YOU'LL CALM DOWN. SOME ANXIETY IS NORMAL IN OUR SITUATION. BUT JUST THINK... SOON WE'LL BE WHERE NO ONE WILL TOUCH US OR EVEN CARE TO LOOK OUR WAY.
I DON'T KNOW. I'VE BEEN RUNNING FROM THE HAND FOR SO LONG, I...
...I THINK I'VE FORGOTTEN HOW TO HOPE.
I HAVEN'T. SANCTUARY IS SO CLOSE I CAN TASTE IT. THE TWO I LOVE MOST IN THE WORLD WILL FINALLY BE SAFE. I'M SO HAPPY I MIGHT JUST SING...
OH, JOHN... MY ONE TRUE LOVE--MY PENANCE AND SALVATION ALL ROLLED INTO ONE--IF YOU SING I'LL BE FORCED TO KILL YOU.
heh...
WE WILL ESCAPE THE HAND.
I KNOW. ONE WAY OR THE OTHER.

AHHr!
SHE'S PROTECTED.
God. THEY'RE COMING OUT OF THIN AIR!
OF COURSE THEY ARE. IT'S OUR STYLE.
TO SURPRISE AND OVERTAKE, JOHN. I SHOULD HAVE THOUGHT THIS OUT BETTER. I'M SO SOR--
JOAN-- IT'S THE HAND! TAKE JEANIE!
Shhh-- DON'T. CONCENTRATE ON THE WORK IN FRONT OF YOU. WE'LL TALK LATER... ON THE BOAT.
I PROMISE.
Okay. NOW... LET'S SHOW THEM WHO THEY'RE MESSING WITH!!


LAST STOP. NO ONE LEFT BUT ME.


THE VICTIMS I KILLED WOULD FILL THIS TRAIN TEN TIMES OVER. AND YET IT'S ALWAYS ME ALONE AT THE END--JUST ME... AND MY CLIENTS... AND MY VICTIMS.

LIKE ME, THIS WOMAN IS WHAT THE HAND HAS SHAPED HER INTO. SHOULDN'T SHE BE COMMENDED FOR TRYING TO BREAK FREE OF THEIR TYRANNY?
HAS THIS WOMAN EVER SHOWED MERCY ON HER VICTIMS?


HAVE I?
IT'S NOT MY JOB TO JUDGE. ONLY TO CARRY OUT THE MISSION.

STILL, I MAKE A PACT WITH MYSELF. SHE'LL DIE QUICKLY AND WITHOUT PAIN.
THIS IS A BRONX-BOUND NUMBER ONE TRAIN.

IT IS MUCH MORE THAN I WOULD DESERVE.

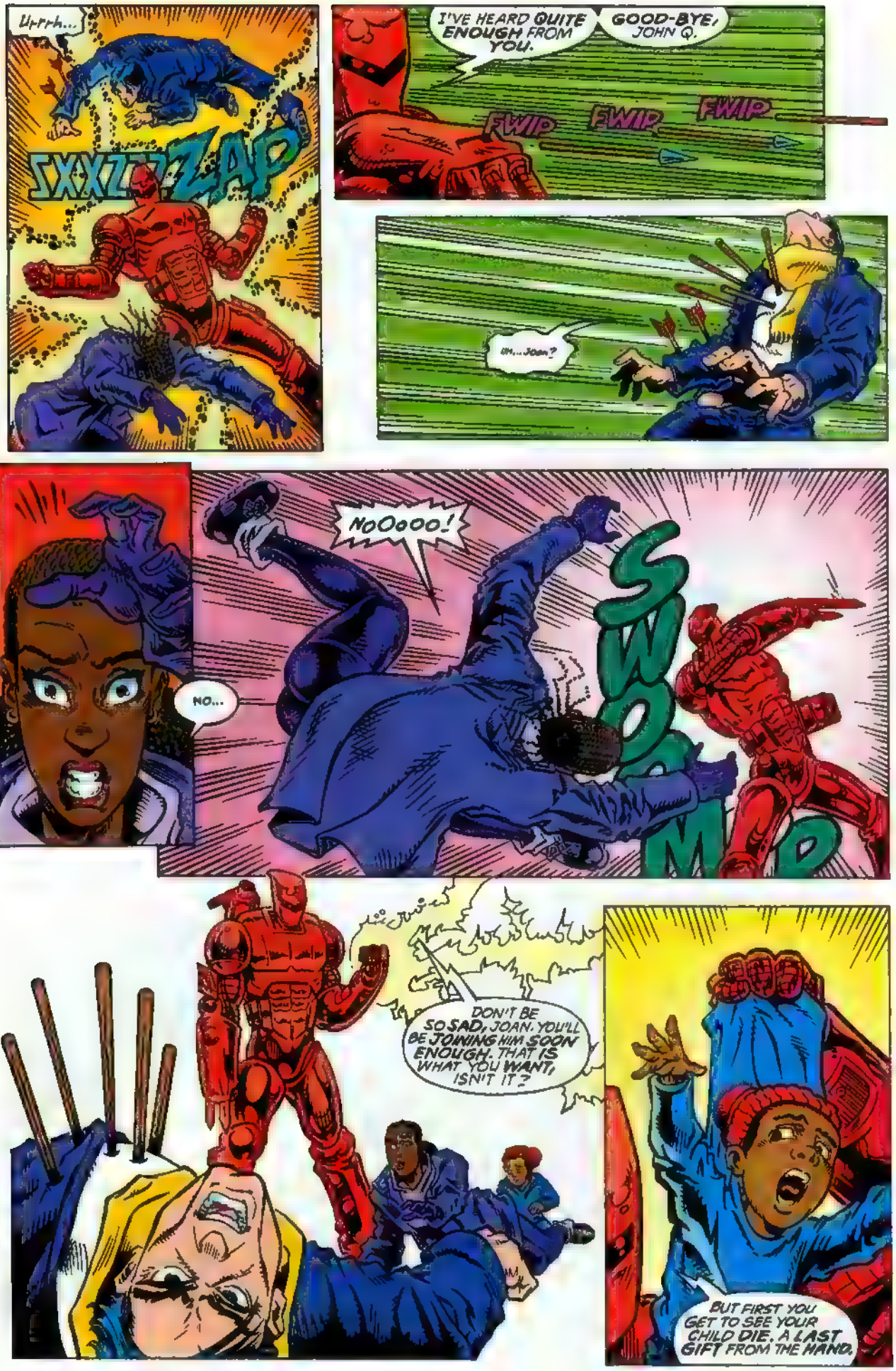
OF COURSE, I NEVER EXPECTED TO SEE WHAT I WAS SEEING.
MY MARK AND HER LOVER... AND HER CHILD... RUNNING DESPERATELY TOWARDS ME
AND PAST ME.
MOMMY... ARE THEY COMING?
NO, BABY. THEY'RE NOT. WE MADE IT.
WE'RE SAFE NOW.
WATCH THE CLOSING DOORS.
THE HAND MUST HAVE FOUND THEM... AND THEY'VE SLIPPED AWAY ONLY TO FIND THEIR CHOSEN ASSASSIN MERE INCHES AWAY FROM THEM.
JOHN... WE'LL GET YOU TO A HOSPITAL. IT'LL BE ALL RIGHT.
I DON'T KNOW, BABY.. I THINK THEY WERE POISON TIPPED..
HOW SAD FOR THEM, HOW TRAG!--
DADDY. YOU FEEL... HOT...

MY THOUGHTS STOP COLD. I NEVER SHOULD HAVE LOOKED INTO THE CHILD'S EYES. MY DISTANCE HAS DISSOLVED.
THE HAND ARRIVES AS THE TRAIN PULLS OUT OF THE STATION. THE TIME FOR THOUGHTS HAS ENDED.
TRAITOR!
YOU WILL NEVER ESCAPE.
YOUR HERETIC BLOODLINE ENDS HERE!
I COUNTED TWENTY-FOUR.
TWENTY-NINE... AND THERE'LL BE A BACK-UP SQUAD SOON. KEEP CHILLY, JOHN.
LIKE ICE. DON'T YOU WORRY.
JEANINE. STAY UNDER THE SEAT. DON'T GET OUT NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS!
SNFF
Uh... Kay...

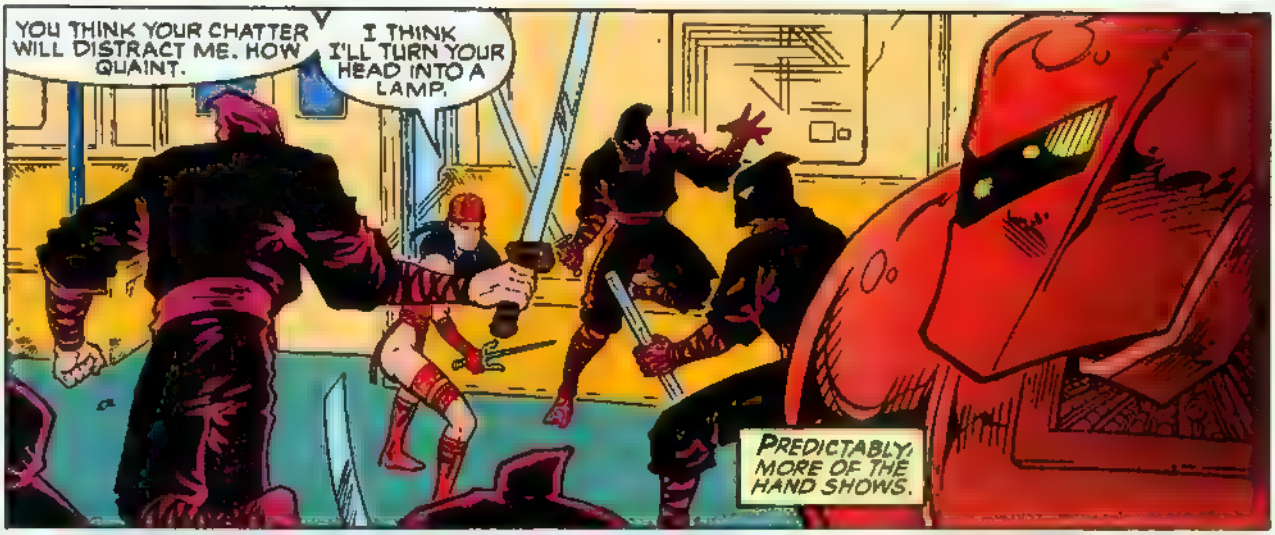
LADY, YOU BETTER LEAVE THIS CAR AND GO ALL THE WAY TOWARDS THE FRONT! TELL ANYONE ELSE ON THE WAY TO DO THE SAME!
BELIEVE ME, YOU DON'T WANT TO BE NEAR US RIGHT NOW.
I SHARE SIMILAR SENTIMENTS.
DO WHAT YOU FEEL YOU MUST.
THE LIGHTS!
I SAID GET OUT OF HERE! Kofk WE CAN'T BE RESPONSIBLE FOR--
AW, JEEZ! JOAN!
I'M HERE, BABY.
THE HAND-- ON THE ROOF IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF SECONDS NOW BEFORE--
KUH BLAM
COVER JEAN--!

THE RED MEN POUR IN--THESE DEVILS FROM A PAST WE CANNOT ESCAPE...
YOU GO! THEY'RE ONLY HERE FOR ME! I CAN BUY YOU ENOUGH TIME TO--
BAM BAM
NO!!
JOHN...
I'VE GOT YOU COVERED! TAKE JEANINE AND RUN FOR IT!
BAM BAM
THEN IT'S SETTLED. NOT ANOTHER WORD.
BAM BAM
YEAH...OKAY... MAYBE WE DO HAVE A CHANCE. MAYBE WE--
KUH ZZZT

THIS IS ALL YOUR DOING!! SHE WAS LOYAL TO THE HAND SINCE BIRTH.
YOU SEDUCED HER YOU TURNED HER INTO THIS MOCKERY OF WHAT SHE WAS!
YOU NEED TO DIE IN PIECES, LITTLE MAN.
GET AWAY FROM HIM, RED. I'LL KILL YOU!
BAM BAM
GUNS CANNOT KILL THE HAND. YOU LEFT US--NOW WE LEAVE YOU DEATH.
KXLLLT
YOU'RE JEALOUS, RED. I HAVE THE GUTS TO DO SOMETHING YOU DIDN'T EVEN DARE THINK OF.
I FREED MYSELF!
WHAP
SHUT UP! YOU JUST SHUT UP!
SHE IS FREE!!
YOU'RE LYING TO YOURSELF, JOAN. YOU'LL NEVER BE FREE. OUR TYPE WERE NOT MEANT FOR--
UNGFH!


Urrrh...
SXXZZZAP
I'VE HEARD QUITE ENOUGH FROM YOU.
GOOD-BYE, JOHN Q.
FWIP
FWIP
FWIP
Um... Joan?
NOOOOO!
NO...
SWOOSH
DON'T BE SO SAD, JOAN. YOU'LL BE JOINING HIM SOON ENOUGH. THAT IS WHAT YOU WANT, ISN'T IT?
BUT FIRST YOU GET TO SEE YOUR CHILD DIE. A LAST GIFT FROM THE HAND.

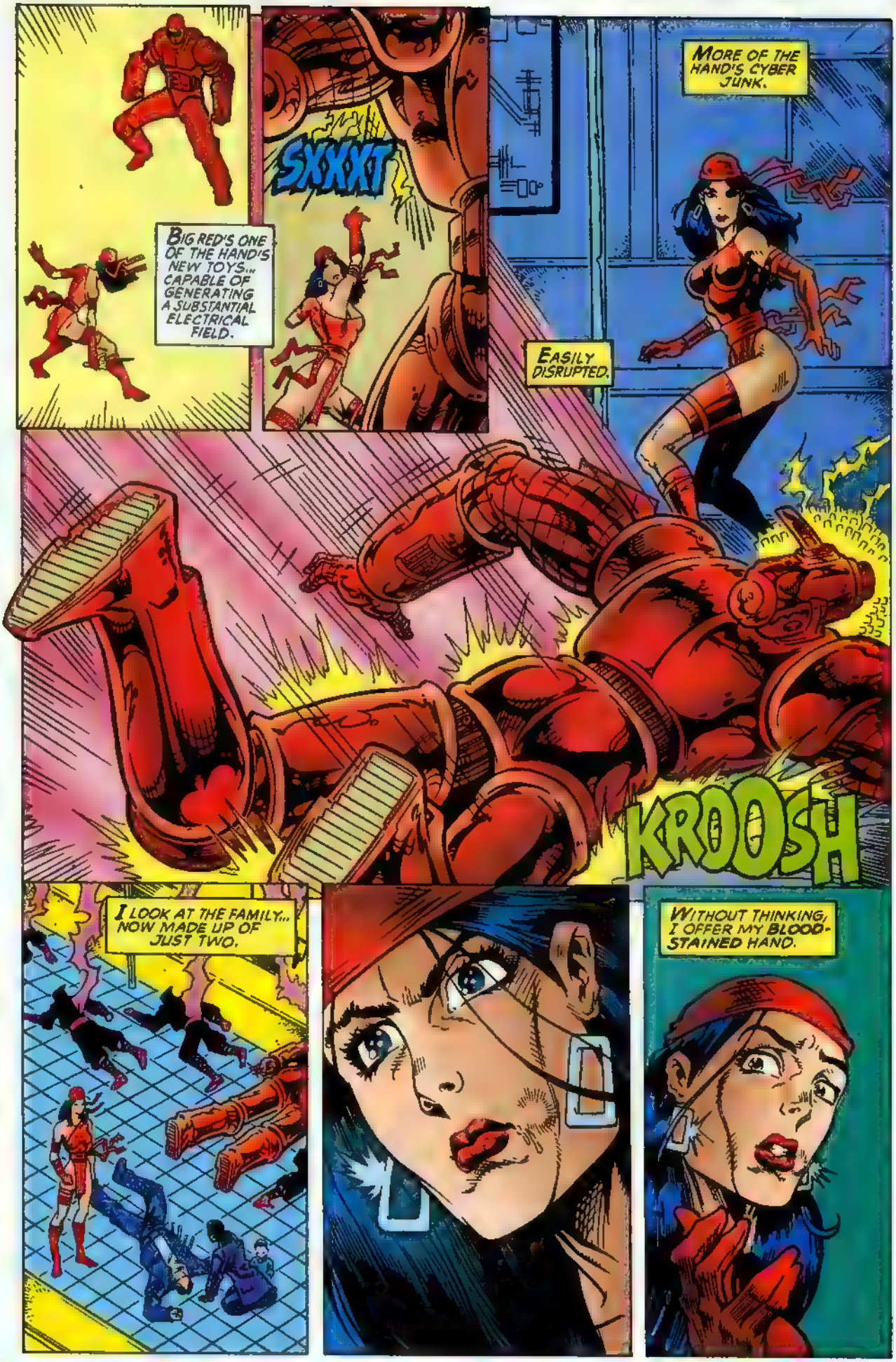
I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF THIS.
I ACT QUICKLY WITHOUT A THOUGHT, REALLY...
MOMMY.
JUST EMOTION
Shhh. STAY DOWN, BABY. I'M HERE.
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT. ELEKTRA.
THEY SPEAK OF YOU AS A LEGEND... AN ABOMINATION.
ONCE YOU BETRAY THE HAND.. YOU ARE NO MORE THAN A WALKING CORPSE.
IS THAT ENVY I HEAR IN YOUR VOICE?
IT'S TIME TO BURY YOU.
I GIVE YOU PERMISSION TO TRY.
Skrimp
OOMPH!
SKREEEE
THE FIRST TIME YOU COME NEAR, YOU WALK AWAY. THE SECOND TIME YOU WON'T...

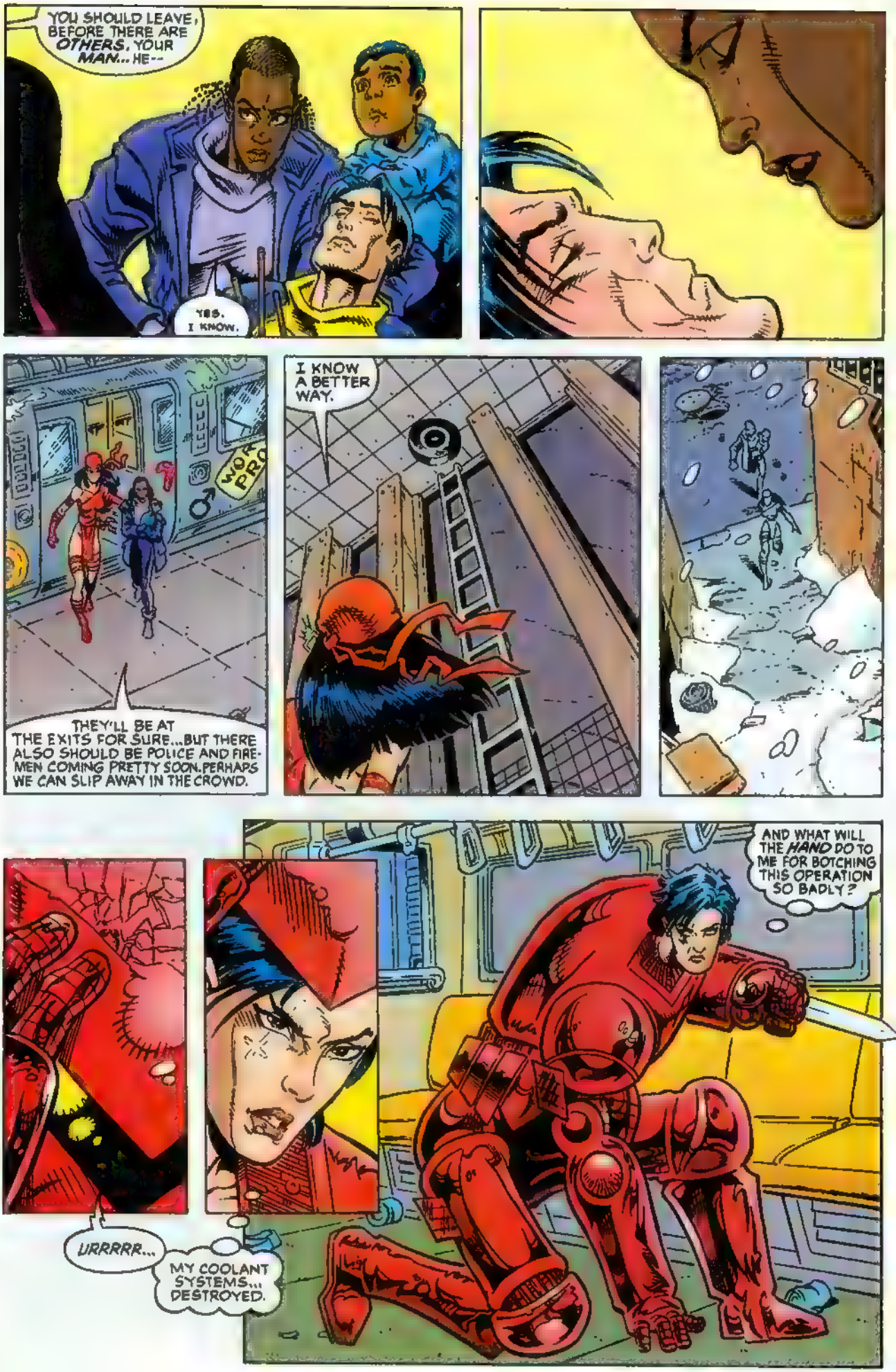

YOU THINK YOUR CHATTER WILL DISTRACT ME. HOW QUAINT.
I THINK I'LL TURN YOUR HEAD INTO A LAMP.
PREDICTABLY, MORE OF THE HAND SHOWS.

I CUT. I RIP. I SHATTER. THEY GO DOWN EASILY, FODDER BEFORE THE REAL BATTLE.

WITH BIG RED.
COME, ASSASSIN. BRING ME WHAT YOU'VE GOT...
SHUK

...AND I'LL BRING MINE!!
SO... YOU LIKE TO PLAY WITH KNIVES.
HAVE IT YOUR WAY. I PROMISE YOU, YOU WON'T WALK AWAY THE SECOND TIME...


BIG RED'S ONE OF THE HAND'S NEW TOYS... CAPABLE OF GENERATING A SUBSTANTIAL ELECTRICAL FIELD.
SXXXT
MORE OF THE HAND'S CYBER JUNK.
EASILY DISRUPTED.
KROOSH
I LOOK AT THE FAMILY... NOW MADE UP OF JUST TWO.
WITHOUT THINKING, I OFFER MY BLOOD-STAINED HAND.


YOU SHOULD LEAVE, BEFORE THERE ARE OTHERS. YOUR MAN... HE--
YES. I KNOW.
THEY'LL BE AT THE EXITS FOR SURE...BUT THERE ALSO SHOULD BE POLICE AND FIREMEN COMING PRETTY SOON. PERHAPS WE CAN SLIP AWAY IN THE CROWD.
I KNOW A BETTER WAY.
AND WHAT WILL THE HAND DO TO ME FOR BOTCHING THIS OPERATION SO BADLY?
URRRRR...
MY COOLANT SYSTEMS... DESTROYED.

NO. THAT WON'T BE THE WAY I GO DOWN.
I WON'T ALLOW MYSELF TO BE DESTROYED LIKE SOME ILL-BEHAVED LIVESTOCK. I'M BETTER THAN THAT.
YOU WON'T ESCAPE ME! NONE OF YOU!
DO YOU HEAR ME?
DO...
...YOU?

NO!!!
DO NOT STRUGGLE.
I AM ELEKTRA, THE ASSASSIN.
TO LOOK UPON ME...
NO...
Chuk
... IS TO SEE THE END OF LIFE.

IT'S DONE.
THE WOMAN'S FACE IS FLUSH WITH HEAT. I SMELL THE SOURNESS OF HER SKIN. SHE'S BEEN POISONED BY THE WARRIOR'S BLADE.
UH... YHUNH... SNIF DADDY... WHERE'S DADDY? SNIF
OH... BABY...
THE HAND WILL COME BACK FOR HER... IF NOT NOW, SOME DAY. THERE IS NO SANCTUARY FROM THEM. IF SHE DIES, IT WOULD PROBABLY BE A BLESSING. IT WOULD BE THE ONLY PEACE SHE'D EVER FIND.
BUT IF SHE LIVED...
...MY CONTRACT WOULD REMAIN UNFULFILLED.
TH-THANK YOU. I DON'T KNOW IF I COULD EVER REPAY YOU.
BUH... WHERE'S DADDY?
YOUR DADDY'S...GONE FOR NOW. BUT HIS SPIRIT WILL ALWAYS BE WITH YOU... PROTECTING YOU. I PROMISE.
SNIF IS THAT TRUE?
YES. IT IS.
I MAKE MY DECISION. AND I WALK AWAY WITH THIS WOMAN AND HER CHILD... TOWARDS A PIER.
AND I'M NOT ASHAMED TO ADMIT IT. I HOPE HER SHIP COMES IN.
END

Dear James,

I am very much enjoying your title OVER THE EDGE so far. While I do like the title (it's so aptly named!), I don't really care for the "And Under A Buck" sub-title. Okay, I appreciate the fact that the book is cheaper than the going average; but do you have to make the title sound cheap, too?

I have been very happy with the characters you've included in the stories so far, but what I'd really like to see in OVER THE EDGE are stories of darker (preferably mystical) Marvel characters who don't currently have their own title.

Why not have Daimon Hellstrom appear in every other issue and let Warren Ellis properly conclude his storyline from HELLSTORM? I didn't particularly like how his title ended, mainly because I felt it was rushed. Warren Ellis did not properly conclude all of the plotlines that he was constructing, and so, many stories were left unfinished.

Or, if not Hellstorm, then how about an entire issue about the Gargoyle?

Joseph Hemedes
#1 2nd St.
St. Ignatius 1110 QC
Philippines

You want more mysticism in the stories? What, Dr. Strange isn't enough for you, Joseph?! But on a more serious note, most readers have requested to see characters of a more popular nature than Gargoyle or Hellstorm--namely the Hulk, Punisher, Daredevil, etc. So for now, it seems as if those are the characters we're going to stick with. But who knows what could happen in the future, so cross your fingers!

And if it's Warren Ellis's prose you're craving, then why not check out the latest issues of EXCALIBUR? He's doing dynamite work over there!

Dear OTE:

I had already picked up the first two issues of UNTOLD TALES OF SPIDER-MAN when just yesterday I saw another one of Marvel's new 99 cent books--OVER THE EDGE (AND UNDER A BUCK)--clever name! "Cool," I thought, "another 99 cent comic."

And then when I read it today, I realized just how excellent this comic really is. For the first time in a long time (perhaps since I started reading comics over two years ago), I actually took time to study the cover, which really captured the essence of Daredevil's hometown of New York City. With its brick buildings and tall spires, this cover really worked! The perspective was very powerful, and best of all, Daredevil was back in his red costume (I hated the others!). But then when I turned the cover to page one...WHOA MAMA!!!

"Hmmm...Robert Brown, eh? Haven't heard of him," I thought. But now, I'll never forget his name. From page one all the way to 23, his art really kicked butt! You can forget all about your X-MEN pencilers, this is the best art I've seen in an extremely long time.

Not just the characters, which were drawn slightly cartoony, but the imagery as well was drawn excellently. Like on panel 1 of page 2, comparing Daredevil and the Gargoyle. The skulls on the edges of the panels were brilliant ideas. And the astonishing artwork on panel 2 of page 7, where we saw Columbia University--it may just be a building, but Brown penciled it with as much detail as a main character--this amount of detail should be put into all parts of a comic book, not just the people! The butterfly and leaves coming from the edges of the panels were an excellent choice as well. The minor details which Robert puts all over the place, helps to draw attention to what a powerful story this really was.

But I don't want Robert Brown getting too much of a big head, so I must also mention that his artwork was greatly enhanced by the inking of Mike Witherby. You can tell that Mike also cares a lot about this book, from details as minor as the speed lines on page 11 when Daredevil grabs the falling builder. I haven't seen movement depicted that well ever.

And let's not leave out old Ralph Macchio. I don't think I've ever read any of his work before, but I'm glad I read this. The plot of the story was amazing! "The Man Without Fear" against the man who personifies fear. A brilliant concept!

Keep this team together--the art is just so excellent (have I mentioned that yet?) and it complements the outstanding storytelling. The only way you could make me happier than this magazine has is by tripling all of the pages in every Marvel comic book!

Reuben Hind
30 Ladysmith Rd.
Exeter, Devon
England

Triple the pages?! You're asking the impossible, Reuben! But, if it's more pages you seek, then you'll be happy to learn that most of the X-books and some of the Spider-books will be upping their page count to 40 in just a few months! Yes, forty pages!

We're very happy that you've enjoyed the OVER THE EDGE series thus far. Ralph, Robert, Mike, and the rest of the creative team send out their sincerest thanks. Keep reading our title, and we're sure you'll be hooked for many issues to come!

Dear James,

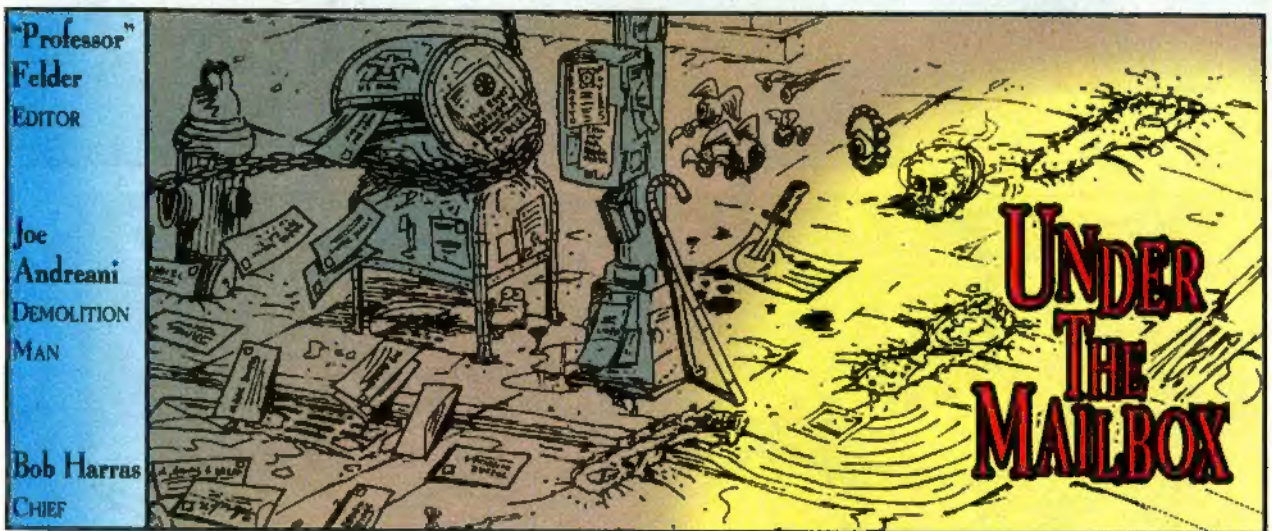
What can I say? Marvel's OVER THE EDGE is one of the freshest new titles to hit the stands in a long time. I always wanted a comic that could rotate a great cast of characters (in the tradition of MARVEL SPOTLIGHT, MARVEL PREMIERE, etc.), and now here it is! My only hope is that Marvel continues this tradition in other areas of the Marvel Universe besides the Edge. Wouldn't an X-Men or Spider-Man book like this be great? It could rotate characters from those groups of characters, giving readers a taste of all different sorts of characters!

But anyway, I've been really pleased with what's been going on in this book. Mr. Macchio and Mr. Brown are doing an outstanding job! Keep up the good work.

Pablo Stephoni
229 Newark Ave.
Lyndhurst, NJ 07071

Thanks, Pablo! Ralph and Robert are blushing with gratitude!

NEXT ISSUE: Artist Robert Brown returns with a Ghost Rider story that will leave you screaming!



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